



"The Only Infallible Rule
of Faith and Practice"

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

*Dedicated to Returning the Presbyterian Church U. S.
to its Primary Mission — Winning the Unsaved for
Christ and Nurturing all Believers in the Faith*

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A Reply to That Open Letter

SEVERAL weeks ago most of the publications of our Church carried an earnest appeal by a number of honored and distinguished leaders in our denomination entitled: "An Open Letter To The Church." Most, but not all, of the signatories were ministers. A few were ruling elders of worthy attainments and deep dedication.

The burden of their communication was a recognition of the growing tensions within the Church, an evaluation of the issues which divide us, and an appeal to the members of various organizational and "pressure groups" of whatever persuasion — liberal or conservative — to abandon all such organized propaganda efforts, and to work for the accomplishment of their goals solely within the framework of the courts of the Church.

This open letter, modest in tone, conciliatory in spirit, and clear in purpose, was deserving of its wide circulation. The authors were probably correct in their estimation that the general viewpoint expressed reflects the broad middle group within the Church — a clear majority, if not the overwhelming majority which they claim. Many, if not most, of our fine conservative ministers will be found in this group, as well as some of more liberal orientation. A large number of laymen can be counted in the company of these brethren. And, except for a different viewpoint in the necessity of some kind of organization to resist the onslaughts of the liberals, perhaps a large number of Concerned Presbyterians will give assent to the basic spirit of this appeal, if not to every detail of it.

As established leaders in the life of the Church, they deserve to be heard, and they will be heard.

In regard to this open letter we have several words of commendation, and then we would raise two questions that highlight for us a somewhat puzzling predicament.

To Be Commended

1. If we have read aright and if we know aright (and we think we do), these men are loyal to the Gospel. They confess that they have been redeemed by the blood of the Crucified One, and are faithful to His Word. They are not likely to meet with equanimity the dissolution of their Presbyterian faith and the disestablishment of their Presbyterian form of government. They may not have realized just how far down that road we have gone, but when the awful moment of truth arrives, their vote will be hopefully on the side of right.

2. These men evidence a proper concern for the peace and order of the Church. They cannot be faulted for this. They would have us return to a nobler and gentler age when everything was done (well, most everything!) "decently and in order." Perhaps there was no time in our church life in which there were not some

rather burning issues nor was there ever a time when some individuals or groups of individuals did not seek by some loose federation or well-knit organization to influence the courts of the Church. But admittedly, by comparison, we are in a mess today. If these men will help us, or rather let us help them (since we are laymen and they, by and large, are ministers) preserve the *purity* and the *integrity* of the Church (in love!), we will help them restore the *peace* and the *unity* of the Church.

3. These men have an innate sense of fairness which should be the hallmark of every presbyter. They recognize the right to free and open debate on controversial issues. They would not hound out of the Church either liberal or conservative groups no matter how strident their criticisms and opposition might be. Of them came the deliverance of the 1965 General Assembly: "We recognize the right of individual conscience in many matters of common concern to members and courts of our Church. We recognize the right of individual and group 'freedom of expression.' Freedom, therefore, on the part of an individual, groups of individuals, and organizations of the Church to express convictions on matters pertaining to the well-being of the Church cannot be denied." They believe, and we believe, that such freedom ought not to be abused. It is not an invitation to attack without clear provocation either the agencies or the servants of the Church. Such opposition could be rather shallow; it could even be stupid and objectively inaccurate, but it must never be an occasion for bearing false witness.

They are not unaware of the fact that an articulate and dedicated minority, polished in parliamentary art, and skillful in the use of the machinery of the Church, can pack any Church court — not excepting the General Assembly. It may be a coincidence that the carefully prepared recommendations recently proposed by the Committee on Assembly Operation which if approved will, among other things, make such machinations for the control of the Assembly by pressure groups difficult of accomplishment, have been met with loud cries of "foul" in some quarters.

This disposition to be fair and their denial of any claims to be the "mind and conscience of the Church" or to be recognized as infallible prophets of the new order, is highly commendable and we are deeply grateful for it.

There are two questions we would like to raise in regard to this "Open Letter."

Two Questions

1. Our first question would take the form of a denial. Are we to infer that our brethren do not feel that the conservatives of our Church are properly con-

Continued on page 2

Reply To That Letter

Continued from page 1

cerned with the social implication of the Gospel? If so, this is not the case.

We believe with every fibre of our being that Christ is the answer, and the only answer to the vast civic, social, economic, and ethical problems of a world in revolution. We believe in applied Christianity; we just have some rather serious reservations about the *kind* of Christianity the liberals would have us apply. Admittedly, there may be some differences among conservatives as to how the Church can witness most effectively in this area. But there is no difference among any of us as to the content of that Gospel, and the necessity of applying it to all sorts and conditions of men.

2. The second question which we raise is not in the spirit of self-justification but in an honest effort to deal with a practical situation. How can we best meet a dedicated, seasoned, well-organized effort on the part of certain liberal leaders to take our Church down the road to ecumenical oblivion without some kind of an organized effort in opposition? These people were in the field long before we. The *Outlook* predates the *Journal*, and the Fellowship of Concern was a going organization before Concerned Presbyterians could "get their boots on." The hour grows late; perhaps by confining efforts exclusively to the Church courts you will keep the "young turks" from making a hash of our household of faith, but it is not easy to beat something with nothing.

The editors of the *Outlook* in their reply to you have put the issue bluntly but clearly: either you join with us in the effort to preserve and to enlarge our Presbyterian Church, or you join with them in the precipitate rush to COCU. This is the determining issue, the decisive issue, the overriding issue. *All roads lead to COCU*. A large amount of the trouble we have had for a number of years — the sharp divisions, the catcalls, the guffaws and the hurrahs as well as more thoughtful and dignified disputes in our jockeying for position have emanated from this: what is the nature and the mission of the Church? Are we to remain as a strictly confessional Church in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition (whether at a national or sectional level really matters little to the extreme ecumenists), or are we to decently inter this distinctive witness, and move into the "main stream" of COCU?

In the Making 25 Years

Nor has this unhappy issue suddenly come upon us. It has been in the making for twenty-five years. The proposed union with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, defeated twelve years ago, was *not* just an effort to bring all the Presbyterian family under one roof (a laudable objective); it was to move us toward what we then guessed and now know to have been the real goal — COCU.

The blandishments and the soft-sell technique — "no harm can come from just talking" — the picture that we are all just a bunch of babes in the ecumenical woods trying to get along together, not really knowing where we want to go, is just so much "window dressing." Many of our brethren may have been taken in by such talk, but shortly the issue will be presented in stark simplicity: that way or this.

The liberal leaders at least know where they want to go. And they don't want to go where Calvinism is, or where the Westminster Confession of Faith is, or where Presbyterian polity is. And above all they don't want to go where the Southern Presbyterian concept of "the spirituality of the Church" is.

Admittedly we do not want to go their way. We don't want an inclusivistic Church. We don't like episcopacy, whether absolute or modified. And the cold hard fact is, the liberals don't really want us. They would be embarrassed to have us join them in their pilgrimage to COCU. At least, not until we got converted. Not until we swapped the old morality of the Bible for the situational ethics of the new order. Not until we have stripped ourselves of the old rags of evangelicalism and conservative Calvinism, and put on the purple and fine linen of religious rationalism. Well, we don't want to sound ungrateful, but we had rather die in our sins! And the greatest mystery and the greatest irrationality of it all is the fact that there are some in our Church who share our basic evangelical convictions, and yet want to be a part of COCU. Shades of the classic Greek tragedy!

Our organization to keep us on a straight and narrow path is not perfect. As laymen we need the advice and counsel of our dedicated conservative ministers. Agreement on all issues is not the price of our cooperation, nor has it ever been. Even a strongly confessional Church has plenty of room for sincere and decided differences of opinion as to the best ways and means to witness effectively to our Lord and Saviour. We will join hands with any group or any non-group who will help us keep our Presbyterian faith. We honor all Christians, even those who feel that COCU is the church of tomorrow. We do not believe that Presbyterianism is essential to the existence of the church of Christ on earth; we do believe it is essential to its perfection and in good conscience we must strive for the best, in the sure and certain knowledge that even "that which is good is enemy of the best."

Our Speakers Bureau

COLONEL Roy LeCraw, known throughout the Church for his able leadership of the Program of Progress, to which he dedicated almost four years of his energy and effort at no cost to the Church, heads the Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., speakers bureau.

In recent years Col. LeCraw has made five trips to Japan, Korea and Taiwan, visiting many of our missionaries in these countries. He has been responsible for raising funds to construct 26 churches in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. He has travelled extensively over the Church, stressing tithing and missionary support.

Groups of Concerned Presbyterians, sessions, men's clubs and conferences and other church organizations that are interested in obtaining capable speakers for their meetings are urged to contact Col. LeCraw, 219 New Walton Building, Atlanta, Ga., 30303 — phone 522-7393, who has a number of capable speakers who will come to speak at your meetings and explain Concerned Presbyterians' objectives.

As most of our speakers are busy men, schedules should be arranged well in advance.

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Now Is The Time For Comment

On the RCA-PCUS First Draft

IN the hands of all our elders is the Proposed Form of Government for a Presbyterian Reformed Church in America. It is a first draft presented for study and suggestion by the Joint Committee, RCA — PCUS. Comments and suggestions about the document are invited and should be sent to Judge John A. Fulton, 1805 Kentucky Home Life Building, Louisville, Kentucky 40202.

Merger negotiations with the Reformed Church in America have now reached the stage of definition. It is of utmost importance for our whole denomination to be made aware of the plan of union that is being developed and to be brought into discussion of the same.

First it should be noted that the doctrinal basis of the new denomination will be expanded to include the confessional symbols of the Reformed Church. The Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of the Synod of Dort are as firm a commitment to Calvinistic orthodoxy as are our own Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Changes occur, however, in the formulation of the ordination vows to be taken by church officers (28-6) that should not go unnoticed nor unchallenged. Our present first two ordination questions have been dropped: (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice? (2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures? The failure to include the first and some form of the second constitutes, in our opinion, a serious downward step.

As we now operate, amendments to the doctrinal standards require the approval of three-fourths of the presbyteries. In the proposed plan (31-2) consent to a change needs only to be given by two-thirds of the presbyteries. This is a concession to the Reformed Church way, but in a day of ever-shifting theological opinion the higher measure of protection of our precious doctrinal heritage is a priceless value.

Again, as we are accustomed to operate, union with other ecclesiastical bodies can only be effected with the consent of three-fourths of the presbyteries. The proposal is that this majority be reduced to two-thirds (31-3). This does not seem wise. If mergers do not overwhelmingly commend themselves, they surely ought not to be entered into. The protection of the three-fourths rule makes for internal peace, nor does it bar the right kind of church union.

It will not escape notice that the proposed plan downgrades the office of deacon. The Board of Deacons gives place to the Consistory (Chapter 6), which is made up of the elders and the deacons. Large powers are given the consistory, but the effect of this accommodation to the methods of our Reformed Church brethren will, one fears, inevitably reduce that zeal and concern for the Church's welfare which are so characteristic of the Diaconate as we have watched it in operation in our denomination.

Provision is made in the proposed plan for a tighter supervision by presbytery of the pastor and the congregation (chapter 22). Presbyteries, for example, may appoint General Pastors; their powers go beyond those now exercised by Presbytery executives and might in time raise the issue of Episcopacy.

Of great interest to every layman will be the section

concerning "Disposition of Property" (7-6). The effect of the change is to vest ownership of church property in the presbytery, for it is specifically stated that if a particular church "withdraws from the communion and discipline of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America . . . those who hold the title to the property shall deliver, convey and transfer to the presbytery of which the church was a member . . . all property of the church." We are not advocates of disunion, but neither do we favor what amounts to a radically new approach to the admittedly controversial and unresolved issue of where resides and should reside title to church property.

We have offered the above comments in the hope that diligent study of the Proposed Form of Government will be engaged in by our people. Let them not fail to communicate their thinking to our representatives on the Joint Committee.

No Time for Seceding

MANY of those who are willing to see the Presbyterian Church U.S. liquidated by submerging it in the coming colossal super-church would be pleased to have all concerned Presbyterians pull out of the Church and join other churches which are still true to the Reformed Faith.

If the many, many thousands of loyal members should leave the Presbyterian Church U.S. at this crucial time the liberals would be in complete control not only of our General Assembly (where they have been able to muster a 3 to 1 vote on some controversial issues in recent years) but they would soon have undisputed control of the presbyteries where the real strength of the Church is vested. *This must not happen!*

In the last two years very substantial progress has been made in acquainting the rank-and-file members of the Church regarding the tragedy which awaits the Presbyterian Church U.S. if the liberals in our midst are allowed to have their way. Thinking people are becoming aroused and are daily becoming more vocal in expressing their concerns to their elders and ministers.

Some of the presbyteries have already thrown off the yoke of liberal leadership. Conservative commissioners have been chosen to represent these presbyteries in the General Assembly for the first time in years. The battle is far from won but the evangelical and conservative forces in the field grow stronger with each passing week.

This is no time to be discouraged and to think of leaving the Church. Instead, we should redouble our efforts, thanking God for the progress which is being made and praying daily that He will guide and direct us until the final victory is assured.

Your Gifts Are Needed

LAST August our Board of Trustees approved an operating budget of \$72,000. to carry out the educational program and the organizational work which they felt was absolutely essential for our fiscal year starting December 1.

We urge every member to pray daily that our financial needs will continue to be met and to give liberally to undergird this movement which seeks to reverse the present trends and to return our Church to its basic mission of leading the unsaved to Christ.

Dangers of a Giant Church

*Do we need a Consultation
against Church Union?*

Carl E. Glasow

THE Consultation on Church Union, which will hold its sixth annual meeting during the first week of May, has in fact become the Consultation *for* Church Union. By its very nature, the consultation is preoccupied with the favorable aspects of uniting the ten denominations now participating in the negotiations. Its reports, two booklets, several pamphlets, and other communications deal mainly with the positive side of the issue.

This approach may have been necessary at first, but the time has come for presentation of the opposing view. The need for a dialogue — *pro and con* — on union is evident from a study of various statements issued by COCU. In the foreword to a booklet containing reports of the first four meetings, the Executive Committee says, "We feel that we cannot now turn back from the road to unity, but must press with all our power to have the millions of our fellow-churchmen know and share this same experience." The inside cover says the COCU denominations "are seeking organic union." Such statements reveal the strong conviction within COCU that organic union has already been accepted as the proper goal for all the churches involved.

A change in the mission and purpose of COCU occurred at its 1965 meeting, according to this same booklet: "At Lexington the Consultation passed from the phase of conversation to negotiation." At the fifth meeting, in Dallas last year, the consultation approved an outline of a time schedule and procedure for the merger called "The Steps and Stages Toward a United Church." The schedule is summarized as follows:

1. Establishment of the consultation in 1962.
2. Adoption of "Principles of Church Union" at the 1966 Dallas meeting.
3. Preparation of a plan of union, and its adoption by the denominations acting severally.
4. Unification of ministry and membership.
5. Writing and adoption of the constitution of the united church.

If this time schedule represented only a possible procedure, there would be no cause for alarm. However, the schedule was approved at the Dallas meeting and apparently is being implemented by COCU as if it had already been approved by the denominations involved. The "Steps and Stages" statement says that as a result of the Dallas meeting, "we are entering upon the third stage of this journey." COCU is committed to the formation of a union church. It has become a Consultation *for* Church Union, moving within an already determined timetable and striving for an already accepted goal.

The COCU idea was originally suggested by Eugene Carson Blake in his historic sermon in San Francisco on December 4, 1960. The intended purpose of the consultation that resulted was to discuss the possibility of organic union among the churches involved, originally

Carl E. Glasow is minister of the First Methodist Church of Cleveland, Tennessee. He holds the B.S. from Cornell University, the M.S. in physical metallurgy from the University of Rochester, and the B.D. from Duke University.

the Methodist Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) and the Evangelical United Brethren Church accepted subsequent invitations, and since then, four other denominations have joined: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern), the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

At the early stage of COCU, only three denominations gave their delegates authority to begin negotiation (United Presbyterian, Christian Churches, and United Church of Christ). Methodist delegates were authorized only to converse about union, not to negotiate or form a program. But soon an attempt will be made to change this. The 1968 Methodist General Conference will undoubtedly be asked to grant official negotiating powers. The Episcopal General Convention will vote this September on whether to authorize the negotiation stage.

Since COCU has become a Consultation *for* Church Union and has already greatly influenced the upper power structures of Methodism and possibly other denominations, it is time for us to have a Consultation *against* Church Union to represent the other side. The denominations are either in stage three or on the brink of it. If all the churches involved give official negotiating status to their COCU delegates, a plan of union will be drawn up and then promoted from the top down through the denominations. This will make dissent even more difficult and unpopular than it is now. Before this crucial step is taken, Protestants must consider such questions as these:

1. *Will union result in a setback to unity?* An aggressive movement to unite the churches from the top down would only create more division. Methodism already has a splinter group, the small Southern Methodist Church, which stayed outside the 1939 north-south merger. More than 100,000 Congregationalists left before the United Church of Christ was formed in 1957. The wrong approach to ecumenism will result in further division — and for valid reasons.

2. *Will union achieve the main goal of its proponents?* The scandal of Protestant division does hurt the work of the Kingdom to some extent, especially on the mission field. However, most of the overt divisiveness comes from aggressive, sectarian groups that are not involved in the proposal for a united church. The denominations participating in COCU are already sharing in cooperative enterprises. Their union will not necessarily bring more harmony into Protestantism since the sectarian denominations are not involved.

3. *Will union repeat the mistakes of the past?* We had organic union in western Christendom in 1500. However, theological perversion, ecclesiastical rigidity, and political involvement dominated the Church. This led Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other reformers to attempt to renew the Church through a return to biblical standards. Our American heritage with its religious liberty, evangelical piety, and separation of church and state is one of the obvious fruits of this reformation. In the minds of many, organic union would be a step backward. The scandal of theological differences might be minimized by a united church, but past ethical, social, and political evils would be encouraged to reappear. It is still true that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

4. *Will union minimize an important benefit of denominationalism?* Protestantism in America is now characterized by competition. This has definite benefits,

especially in a culture with a Christian majority. In fact, friendly competition in an open society is fundamental to the free-enterprise system. Union will minimize creative competition in Protestantism. If business monopolies, labor monopolies, and government monopolies are bad for our democratic society, then religion monopolies would also be bad, and for much the same reasons.

5. *Will union really result in renewal?* There is much talk about the renewal of the Church today, and many schemes have been proposed to achieve it. A basic part of the answer to renewal is to be found in Jesus' idea of pruning the tree to produce fruit. The Church must set higher standards of discipline for itself if it is to be vital and respected in society. Union may bring more regimentation, but it will not bring more discipline. And by its very nature, union will lead to the compromise of doctrinal and ethical standards.

6. *Will union lead to a loss of individualism?* Individualism is on the wane in our urban, technological society marked by mass communication and mass advertising. Conformity is the order of the day, and persons are losing their identity in our secular age. Church union will tend to destroy individualism in religion. Conformity in doctrine, conformity in worship, conformity in religious education, and conformity in organization will further depersonalize our society.

The Consultation against Church Union should begin its work immediately. The months ahead are critical for Protestants. Now is the time for Protestant clergy and laity to be warned of the dangers of a united church.

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The CLC and The Bible

ONE of the most controversial issues before the Presbyterian Church U.S. is the new Covenant Life Curriculum, now in its third year of general use throughout the Church.

Accurate figures have not been released on the use of the Covenant Life Curriculum, so it would be only a guess on anyone's part as to how many congregations in the Presbyterian Church U.S. are using it in whole or in part. However, based on figures that have been released by the Board of Christian Education, as well as observation of selected churches throughout the General Assembly, it probably would be safe to say that perhaps 90% or more of the churches are using the Covenant Life Curriculum in some department or class. On the other hand, it can be said with equal certainty that perhaps less than 10% of the churches of the Presbyterian Church U.S. are using the Covenant Life Curriculum exclusively, or in all departments. Figures from the Board of Christian Education indicate that less than one-half the adult membership of the Church is presently engaged in a study of the current Covenant Life Curriculum Adult Study Book, *The Christian Life*.

Why is the CLC controversial, and why has it received something less than total acceptance by the Church?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that the CLC is quite frankly a new way of study, calling for a reorganization of the Sunday School and for a new approach

to teaching, with much more expected of both teacher and student. In some churches teachers have said that they simply could not cope with the material as offered to them for use. Where, however, teachers have worked hard with the material, using it as suggested, the new teaching methods have proved helpful and classes have responded with enthusiasm.

However, there also is the problem of *content*, or the material that is taught. Thoughtful Presbyterians have been troubled to discover that most of the CLC text adopts a "liberal" line, and that the overall attitude towards the Bible is "liberal" and critical. They have been somewhat disconcerted, for instance, to find that much of the Bible is treated as myth and as fable, and that dates of Biblical books are radically changed in accordance with the latest "liberal" theories. In a treatment of the Book of Daniel, for instance, *The Mighty Acts of God* dates Daniel about 100 years before Christ in conformity with recent radical views that do not believe Daniel existed at all, because prophecies in the book point to events so far ahead of the time the Bible says Daniel actually lived.

In addition, controversy has been created by the CLC in that many of the texts do not study the Bible at all, but various aspects of the Christian life as well as the history of the Church. The CLC has taken the position that the Bible is only one textbook to be studied in Sunday School, and that other texts can be studied with equal profit. The CLC "cycle" itself offers the Bible as a primary subject for study only once every three years, the other two years being devoted to (1) Something having to do with the Church, and (2) Something having to do with the Christian life.

A third reason for controversy is that the CLC, while defending lines of study as important and necessary to the Christian life, too often takes un-Christian or "liberal" views towards those lines of study. For instance, in the current adult studies in ethics, the motivation for Christian ethics (why a Christian behaves as he does) is not given in traditional Presbyterian or Biblical terms at all. Neither heaven nor hell is said to be a factor in the behavior of a Christian. God's "judgment" is said to be always for good and never for punishment, and the whole idea of rewards and punishments as having any validity in Christian behavior is discarded. In a youth study book the question of war and military service is treated in such a way as to be unacceptable to anyone who still believes in patriotism or in the responsibility of the free world to defend itself against the inroads of totalitarianism and Communism.

In other words, while CLC planners and promoters may have valid reason for the choice of subjects covered in the CLC, they often lose the support of the Church by treating those subjects in a radical or "liberal" way.

One of the most careful studies of the heart of the CLC, namely, its treatment of the Bible, has been made by a minister of the Reformed Church in America, the Rev. Arthur L. Scheid. In his study, he has the following to say:

"We begin our evaluation of the *Covenant Life Curriculum* (hereafter CLC) with the view of Scripture taken by William Kennedy in his book, *Into Covenant Life*. In the teachers manual, Kennedy speaks of the human element involved in the writing of the Bible. His thesis is that the Bible was written by men who were subject to the same human frailties as you and I; therefore, the Bible is subject to human weakness and error.

" . . . to put it in Paul's words, the Bible, like the

Continued on page 6

CLC and the Bible

Continued from page 5

church and like us Christians, is an earthen vessel within which the treasure is kept.' (*Into Covenant Life*; p. 272, teachers book).

"Now, unfortunately for Mr. Kennedy, the text from which he derives this statement, (II Cor. 4:7), does not refer to the Bible as an earthen vessel. Rather, this passage deals with the minister of the Gospel who is an earthen vessel to whom God has entrusted the Gospel message.

"We are aware that a human element is involved in the writing of the Scriptures, but the use of man as an instrument does not permit error, or inspiration would be meaningless. Inspiration, by definition means, that God so guided and directed the authors of Scripture that the end product is infallible and inerrant. This view does not imply a mechanical inspiration, but a plenary (full), verbal inspiration of the Scriptures . . .

Barthian View

"The content of the CLC generally takes a neo-orthodox or Barthian view of the Scriptures. Neely McCarter says in his book,

"The threefold understanding of the Word of God which is given in *Hear the Word of the Lord* is based on the theology of Karl Barth . . ." (McCarter, *Hear the Word of the Lord*; p. 29, teachers book).

"What is Barthianism? Barthianism or Neo-orthodoxy (more correctly called the New Liberalism) has redefined the authority of the Bible, so that it is no longer the Word of God, as such. Passages in the Bible become the Word of God, only as the Holy Spirit moves within the heart of the reader to convince him that a particular passage is the Word of God. Thus, the Word of God may be found in the Bible (the treasure in the earthen vessel), but the Bible is not itself the Word of God. Every man must decide for himself what is the Word of God within the Bible.

"The Rev. Robert Bast, in a written report to the Consistory of the First Reformed Church of Orange City, Iowa, said:

"The characteristic of the CLC is that Scripture is viewed in the Neo-orthodox or Barthian fashion . . . Scripture is not viewed as infallible. On the contrary, there is in the whole series a generally apologetic attitude toward the Bible. There is no real authority to the Scriptures."

"Barth's view leads to every kind of interpretation and point of view. Each man is free to accept what he pleases and also to reject what he pleases in the Bible. McCarter says, 'The idea that the Bible must be verbally pure or correct at every point is not biblical; it is a human belief.' (McCarter, p. 38, pupils books).

"The Scriptures are treated, not as the revelation which God has given, but as a *witness* (report) of that revelation. Revelation, for CLC authors, consists only in the events described in Scripture, not in Scripture itself. Often this report (Scripture) is faulty and subject to error. Nor can we be certain that events described in Scripture ever actually happened. Each passage must be studied in the most critical way to discover what actually happened, rather than taking the biblical account at its face value.

Supernatural Denied

"This position is a basic denial of the supernatural character of the revelation of God. CLC holds that, because the Bible is of human authorship, it therefore necessarily contains error. The Reformed position teaches that the biblical writers were inspired in such manner by the Holy Spirit that the revelation God gave them was supernatural. The writers were the

instruments whom God used to record a supernatural revelation.

"CLC suggests to the student that he must discover what the authors of Scripture meant to say, rather than to accept what they actually said. For example, the Bible may speak of the virgin birth, but the fact of the virgin birth is not important. What did the author intend to express by the idea of a virgin birth? Each of us must decide this question for himself. Every student in the class may have a different idea, but each one is entitled to think that he is correct, according to this view.

Other Errors

"The denial of the infallible authority of the Bible is the basis from which a multitude of errors follow. This problem of inspiration and authority is the heart of the issue. If we cannot accept the Bible at face value, then every article of our faith is subject to question. The failure of CLC to accept the complete authority of Scripture may be seen in the damage that is done to the most fundamental beliefs of historic Christianity.

"The critical approach accepts nothing in the Bible at face value. Every book, every line, must be examined to determine what treasure, if any, may be found in the earthen vessel of the Bible. Some of the results follow.

"First, the 'documentary hypothesis' (or theory) of the authorship of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) is accepted as though it were a fact. This theory declares that Moses was not the sole author of the first five books of the Old Testament. Indeed, Moses may have written nothing, though our Savior spoke as though Moses were the author of the first five books. Was our Savior in error? Either that, say these men, or He may have accommodated Himself to the ignorance of the people. The writings of at least four men were compiled by a fifth man to produce what our doctrinal standards call the 'books of Moses.' Mary Boney says:

"To account for duplication and for differences in vocabulary, style, and viewpoint that are found in the first few books of the Bible, an insight has been offered, that these books, known as the "books of Moses," were not written by one man at one time, and from one point of view, but were composed of several different strands of material that have been woven together to form one story' (Boney, *God Calls*, p. 14, leaders book).

"Second, let us see the position that is taken with regard to the creation and fall of man. Wayne Meeks writes: 'Why is it that in this ancient story we are told about a tree whose fruit symbolized the "knowledge of good and evil"? . . . The very name of the central character gives us a hint: *Adam*, the Hebrew word for mankind. This is the story of Everyman . . . There follows in the succeeding chapters an epic of broken community. The epic links together a number of separate sagas . . .' (Meeks, *Go From Your Father's House*, pp. 52, 57, students book).

Treated as Myths

"The first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis are not treated as factual revelation, but as a series of sagas and myths which are not actually historical. Thus, Adam represents 'Everyman.' The fall was not a momentous act of disobedience to the commandment of God in the garden. All men are not born with a sinful nature. The fall, rather, takes place every time any man commits evil and injustice to society.

"Third, if Adam was not a real historical man, if he was not the father of the human race, then original sin (the teaching that every child is born with a corrupted nature) is ruled out. What, then, is the position

of CLC with regard to the sinful nature of man? No final position on the nature and effects of sin is presented. Man is not viewed as a creature who has a totally depraved nature and is in need of God's work of salvation. Because the fall of man as described in Genesis is only a myth, the condition of man as a result of that fall is not expressed. Paul wrote, 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (I Cor. 15:22). Again, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . .' (Rom. 5:12). But Adam, according to CLC does not refer to one man who committed one sin, and by that sin involved all mankind in sin and death. Adam is 'Everyman,' and Everyman enters into sin for himself.

"Again, because there is no concept of original sin and depravity, and because Adam, the 'Everyman' is God's creature, a universalistic view of salvation is presented, if not clearly expressed. Nowhere is the atoning work of our Lord described in its particular application to God's chosen people, nor are we told that salvation is received by grace through faith alone. Elder Henry Boeve of the Ebenezer Reformed Church reported to Zeeland Classis:

"('God Calls, by Mary L. Boney) does not clearly teach the holiness of God or the atonement for sin and the absolute necessity of repentance, but it says "after man sins and is punished, God restores him and offers him another chance." (Boeve, Report to Zeeland Classis, Dec. 1, 1964)

Deficient View of Sin

"Because CLC has a deficient view of man's sin, we are not surprised to discover that CLC has little to say about a substitutionary atonement in which the Son of God takes the place of sinful man in bearing the wrath of God. Commenting on the book *The Meaning of Jesus Christ*, the Rev. Edwin A. Martin

reported: 'The doctrine of the substitutionary atonement is given a mere sentence.' (Martin, Report to Zeeland Classis, Dec. 1, 1964)

"Errors multiply of course, even if they are errors of silence. Just as CLC has little to say about man as a hopeless, helpless sinner who is under the wrath of God, just as CLC has little to say about a Savior who must interpose His precious blood, so CLC has little to say about the issue of personal salvation. The Rev. Jacob Blaauw, commenting on *The Mighty Acts of God*, wrote: 'Nowhere in the entire volume is the student brought face to face with Jesus Christ and his need of Him as a personal Savior. The supreme subjects of the Scriptures: redemption, personal salvation, reconciliation through the blood of the cross and need for regeneration by the Holy Spirit are omitted. The vital personal question, "Are you SAVED from sin's guilt and power?" is suggested impersonally, generalized, paraphrased, but we never come out with it. That is the greatest and FATAL FLAW . . .'

"Considering the above, one is not surprised to learn that CLC is deficient in the area of Evangelism.

"In addition, many will find the material offensive. The Rev. Adrian Newhouse reported, 'The opening chapters of the student's book (*Go From Your Father's House*) are very disgusting . . . they are nauseating. They read like pages from a movie or sex magazine. The language is extremely objectionable . . . I believe a Sunday School curriculum ought not to popularize worldly language and life, but Christ-like life, language and conduct.'"

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Strange Bedfellows — The Methodist Church

A look at some of the activities of denominations participating in COCU, to which we are being urged to surrender control of our Church, is highly disturbing to say the least. Let's start with the Methodists:

■ The Methodist Board of General Education has launched a project aimed at solving the problems of urban young adults. Assigned as coordinator was the Rev. Theodore McIlvanna, who sponsored the notorious San Francisco ball for homosexuals.

■ The April-June, 1966, Quarterly for Youth — *Power* — had this to say about our being ready for Christ's coming in glory: "Just because the Lord may surprise us, we had better get the Negro population integrated, peace established in Vietnam and a democratic government in Santo Domingo, food in Asia and mainland China rescued from its isolation. There is no time for waiting."

This devotional quarterly is published by and for the youth of the Disciples of Christ, Evangelical United Brethren, the *Methodist Church*, the Protestant Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ — all active participants in COCU. That's what these folks will be telling our young people if the liberals in the Church are not halted.

■ Bishop Edgar A. Love of the Methodist Church sponsored a testimonial dinner for Dr. Herbert Aptheker, a top-ranking Communist, at the New York Hilton Hotel on April 28, 1966. More than a dozen other clergymen and some 60 college professors joined in the sponsorship.

■ On August 25, 1966, the *San Francisco Chronicle*

reported that an uninhibited jazz dancer took off all his clothes and exposed his nakedness in an act called "Psychedelic Experience." The performance was sponsored by an official church mission with funds contributed by the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church, the American Baptists and the *Methodist Church*. A group of high school boys and girls were taken to this outpost of indecency by a *Methodist Women's Mission*!

In the summer of 1965 many Methodist churches in New York City presented a play entitled "A Man Dies." It portrayed Christ's life and death, using rock n' roll music, jive, pantomime and "contemporary symbols." One of the songs sung while dancers performed used these words:

**It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old.**

**Let's stay at home round the telly, dear,
The church is too damn cold.**

Judas, the betrayer, danced with his girl-friend and sang:

**I need the money
I need it, honey,
I could just do with wealth.
If he is God
He can take care of himself.**

A coke and a hard roll were used instead of bread and wine in portraying the Last Supper. What sacrilege!

Are we prepared to have our children and our grandchildren exposed to such teachings, such indecencies and such church-sponsored blasphemies? They *will* be exposed to all these things if the liberal leaders in our Church are permitted to have their way!

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

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The Rev. George Aiken Taylor
Presbyterian Journal
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— CONTENTS —

A Reply to That Open Letter
Dangers of a Giant Church
On the RCA-PCUS First Draft
The CLC and the Bible
Strange Bedfellows